

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 000112

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: GAERC: GOI POSITIVE ON U.S.-EU RELATIONSHIP

REF: A. STATE 9678

[1](#)B. DUBLIN 30

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF MARY DALY FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (C) On January 27, POL/ECON Chief met with Gerard Keown, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) EU correspondent, to get Irish views on the upcoming GAERC (reftel points had been shared earlier in the week). Keown opened the meeting with high praise for A/S Jones' January 15 consultations with EU political directors. He said the meeting was especially productive, and the Irish were pleased that the U.S. and the EU shared a similar approach to the agenda and the mechanism of the President's February trip. The Irish expect the Middle East to be the most prominent issue on the agenda, but also said that new EU members hope to hear the President reconfirm U.S. support for European integration. When urged by POL/ECON chief to use Ireland's influence to encourage EU cooperation with the U.S., Keown responded that Ireland believes that the relationship with the U.S. is the single most important relationship the EU has. He said PM Bertie Ahern regularly stresses that point with his counterparts. Keown also expressed Ireland's high regard for U.S.-EU cooperation in Ukraine and for U.S. relief efforts following the Tsunami. Details follow.

--Tsunami. Keown said that the Irish government had high praise for U.S. relief efforts in Asia. DFA Sec General Gallagher reinforced the point in a subsequent conversation with the Ambassador. Gallagher said that Irish officials on the ground had been deeply impressed by the work of U.S. forces, noting that American troops were often more helpful and more effective even than indigenous forces. Keown, meanwhile, said the EU was moving gradually from immediate humanitarian concerns to focusing on reconstruction and economic activity. He also said the EU is considering how it can better coordinate national contributions to future civil crises, and whether it should formalize civilian rapid response teams.

--Ukraine. Keown, who served as an EU election observer in Ukraine, said U.S.-EU cooperation in Ukraine was a terrific example of what we can accomplish together. (State Minister for Development Lenihan had said the same in a speech earlier in the week.) Keown expressed great satisfaction at the turn of events in Ukraine, and concern that Ukrainians might be disappointed at the pace and difficulty of reform.

--Iraq. Later on January 27, the GOI issued a statement very supportive of Iraqi elections (septel). The statement follows much embassy advocacy at many levels.

--Middle East. Keown cited the Middle East as the most important issue on the agenda when the President comes to Europe. Asked what Ireland hoped the visit would achieve, Keown said the EU would like to hear a public reaffirmation of U.S. commitment to the Road Map and to working with the Quartet.

--Hizballah. Keown first gave a bureaucratic answer to the question of designating the political wing of Hizballah as a terrorist organization, saying it was "under review within the EU." When POL/ECON chief suggested that that was a non-answer, given the amount of time the issue had been before the EU, Keown agreed and said that the issue was stalled because some countries feared that designating Hizballah would polarize the situation further, especially if it led to Hizballah's social services being interrupted.

--Iran. Keown made the surprising comment that the EU felt there was no point in discussing Iran at the February 28 IAEA Board meeting, since the meeting comes ahead of the March EU3 - Iran working groups. He said the EU would be prepared to discuss Iran at the June meeting. He said the EU was skeptical of whether its approach with Iran would work, but wanted to give the process a chance to succeed. He said the first round of talks were "a good start," but emphasized that the EU must adhere to conditionality and not reward Iran unless it met the criteria set.

--Balkans. GOI supports the Luxembourg presidency's approach.

--Cuba. Ireland has no embassy in Cuba, but continues to review U.S. ideas on how it can support the opposition (ref

b).

--China. See septel regarding PM Ahern's January trip to  
China.  
KENNY